



LEWIS & CLARK CITY-COUNTY Health Department

EXHIBIT 4

DATE 1/14/2011

HB 191

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January 14, 2011

House Human Services Committee
Representative David Howard, Chairman

Re: HB 191 (Representative Flynn)

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Laurel Riek and I am an Environmental Health Specialist for Lewis and Clark County. The Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department and the Association of Montana Public Health Officials would like to go on record in opposition of HB 191.

The purpose of food facility regulation is to prevent food borne illness. This is accomplished through education, review and inspection of facilities and registration by non-profit groups wishing to sponsor a community fund raiser. There are many community fund raising events that have been approved in Lewis & Clark County without the "official" non-profit standing.

Registration with the health department allows food safety experts to provide education on items to be prepared. This is imperative for the health of our communities. There are many non-profit events that are high risk for causing food borne illness due to the food and/or volume prepared. Large volumes of food must be handled differently then what is needed for home and family. When discussed with the health department, we can suggest safe methods of preparation that will manage the risk of food borne illness. Training is the key to understanding food safety and preventing a food borne illness. Keep the event safe and successful, contact the health department for help.

People are wonderfully creative and have come to us with interesting ideas. One such idea was to cook a whole buffalo on a barbecue spit. Sometimes people add the idea of stuffing with chickens. This is an incredibly difficult way to get safe cooking temperatures and prevent food borne illness. Another idea was a huge pizza cooked outside. Without our input, there could be large outbreaks of foodborne illness.

We have also had requests for making salsa to sell as a fundraising event. This is a food that can be a botulism risk and requires production by those trained in food processing. To produce a high risk food without the appropriate equipment and process review can be a risk to public health.

The Farmer's Market exemptions are in a controlled setting that requires the Market Master to maintain records of what is being sold and make records available to local health departments. This allows trace back for any disease outbreak and review to prevent the sale of high risk foods that are not under the exemption.

Please do not remove the ability to trace back the origins of food associated with foodborne illness and to provide education to those that wish to provide food to the public.